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Course Syllabi

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Spring 2-1-2006

### ART 451.01: Seminar - Art and Insanity

H. Rafael Chacon

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**Art 451**  
**Seminar: Art and Insanity**  
Spring 2006

Mondays and Wednesdays, 10:40-12 am, Fine arts 302  
Professor, H. Rafael Chacón, Ph.D.  
Fine Arts 202, x. 2735, hrafael.chacon@umontana.edu  
Office hours: MW, 9-10 am, TTR, 12-1 am

**Description and Aims:** This seminar proposes to explore the nature of human creativity and the artistic impulse, their intersection with the field of psychology, and the social perception of the artist. We shall concern ourselves with the overarching question: “Why do artists do what they do?” Acknowledging the difficulty of answering such an enigmatic question, we shall nevertheless explore some of history’s possible answers. In particular, we shall analyze various historical topoi, archetypes ranging from the genius to the lunatic, used to describe the character of the artist from ancient Greece to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Focusing on the eccentric, abnormal, and sometimes aberrant behavior of some artists, we shall also try to understand current clinical definitions of madness and depression and their intersection with creativity, as well as other forms of socially constructed marginalizations. This 3-credit course satisfies the H and W General Education requirements. Art 150 and/or 151 and a 300-level art history course are pre-requisites for this class.

**Requirements:**

Participation counts for 50 % of the grade.

A research paper and presentation counts for 50% of the grade.

**Readings:** readings will be available on reserve at the Mansfield Library, both in hard copy and electronically.

**Disabilities:**

If you suspect or know that you have any disabilities that may impede the successful completion of this course, please contact the Disability Services for Students (DSS) office and speak with me as soon as possible.

**Academic Misconduct and the Student Conduct Code:** All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at [www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/Index.cfm/page/1321](http://www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/Index.cfm/page/1321).

**Syllabus:**

**Week 1. The artist as genius**

Witkower, 93-99.

May, 44-65

*The Book of Knowledge*, 2751-55.

Ludwig, 330-56.

## Corrected Syllabus

### **Week 4. The artist as melancholic**

Wittkower, 98-107.

Sontag, 107-34.

### **Week 5.**

**Monday, February 20, NO CLASS—Presidents' Day**

**Paper topics due in class on Wednesday, February 22**

Angier, B5-6.

Jamison, 62-7.

Gutin, 75-82

### **Week 6. The artist as lunatic**

Wittkower, 124-32.

Arnheim, 113-20.

### **Week 7.**

Gilman, 7-14.

Pruett, H1 & H27.

### **Week 8 The artist as loner**

Wittkower, 63-66, 133-149.

Van Gogh, 135-57.

### **Week 9. The artist as outcast**

Wittkower, 67-78, 84-93.

May, 80-85.

Kuspit, 117-21.

Jones, 201-11.

### **Week 10.**

**NO CLASSES, SPRING BREAK**

### **Week 11. The artist as naïve**

Heller, 21-24.

Taylor, 33-42.

Dudar, 79-87.

### **Week 12. The artist as shaman**

**Research papers due in class on Monday, April 10. NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

Eliade, 81-85 and 93-101.  
Lipsey, 1-28 & 299-320.  
Burke Feldman, 1-15.

**Week 13. Musings on creation**

Dewey, 245-71.  
Newman, 179-205.  
Filliou, 731-36.

**Week 14. The psychological creature**

Dewey, 3-19.  
Gombrich, 30-44.  
Wittkower, 281-94.

**Week 15 and Finals Week**

Presentations.